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The Well Dressed Woman

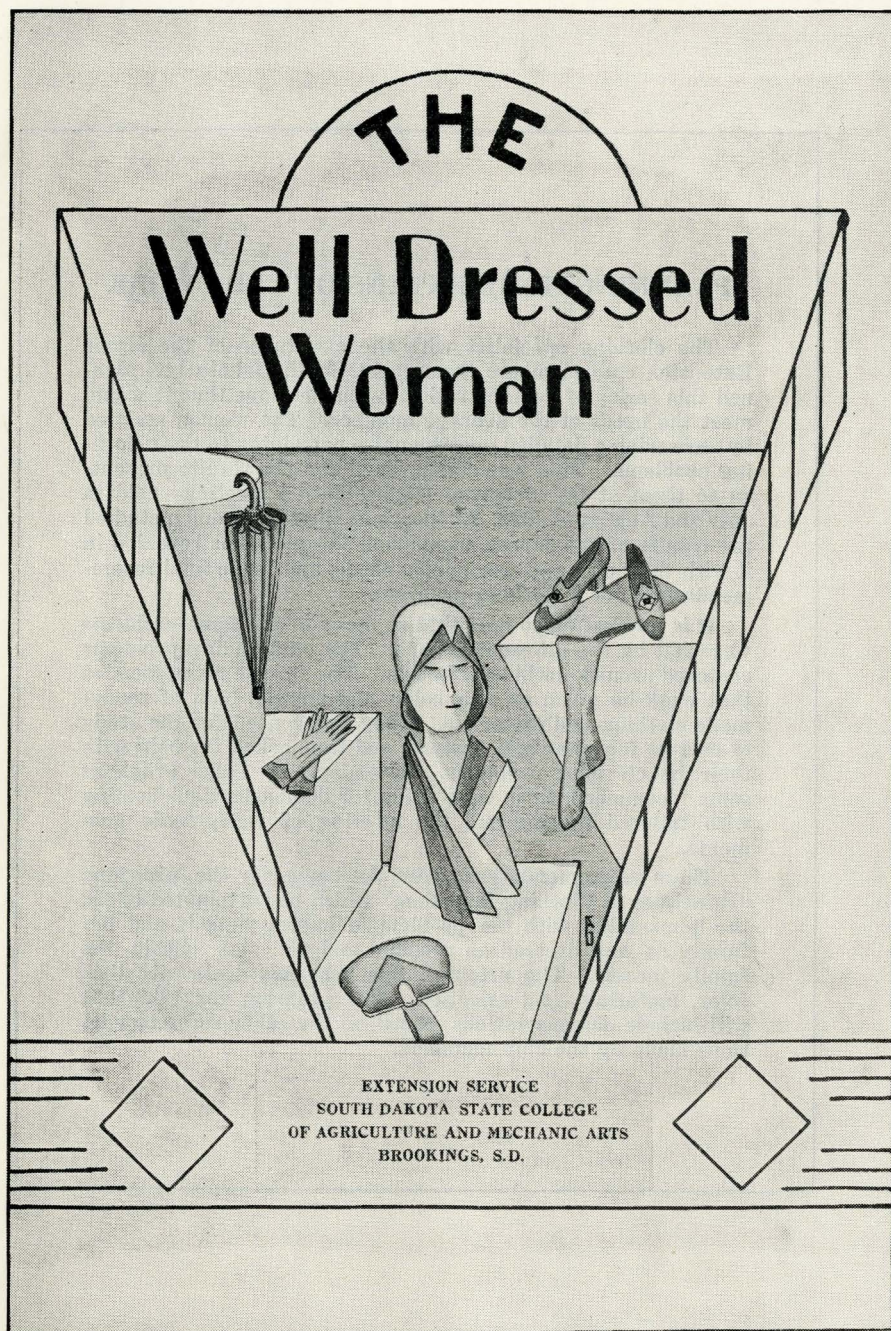
Anita Andrews

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PLANNING HOME EXTENSION CLUB WORK

The clothing specialist with the assistance of the Home Extension club members throughout South Dakota has planned this series of demonstrations with the hope that it would meet the needs of the average member. The women assisted by answering a detailed questionnaire pertaining to their clothing problems. This was summarized and the results presented to them at the Program Determination meetings held in July and August of 1929. At these meetings the women studied the results of the survey, comparing the problems revealed in it with their own and community needs, and made final recommendations for a clothing program.

It is interesting to note that so many of the same problems were felt by the different groups. The outstanding problems centered around clothing selection. The women recommended that work be given on line, color, and buying, both of ready-made clothing and materials. They felt a need for the study of correct footwear and posture, and they asked for help with their dry cleaning problems. Secondary to these problems some recommendations were made for demonstrations dealing with tailored finishes and the altering of ready-made garments.

These recommendations were the basis for the program, "Principles of Clothing Selection," which has attempted to aid the homemaker with her problem of having herself and her family as well dressed as possible and yet stay within the family income. The program this year has dealt with line, color, materials, and selection. The program for 1930-1931 will include demonstrations based on the other recommendations made by the club members.

The Well Dressed Woman

Anita Andrews

Extension Specialist in Clothing

"Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy;
But not expressed in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man."

THAT ATTIRE may affect behavior, and even contribute to success in life is a factor that is too often overlooked. Women sometimes fail to recognize the important part that clothes do play. "Clothes do not make the man," but as Henry Ward Beecher says, "They do make him look a lot better after he is made."

A well dressed woman commands attention without being conspicuous. Her clothes are becoming, suitable, and appropriate. In selecting her costume, she has turned a deaf ear to the flattering words of the saleswoman and has truly analyzed herself. She has taken care in selecting her outfit so that one article has not over-shadowed another and thus detracted from the whole. She is the woman who is in demand and the object of many envious eyes.

She has made her selection on these points:

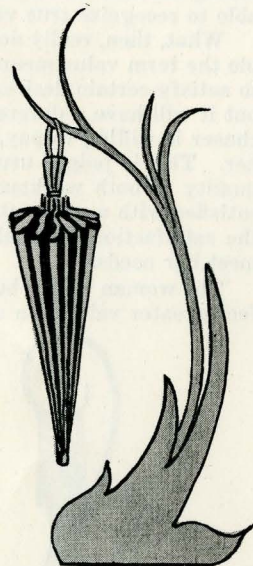
1. Becomingness in color and line.
2. Appropriateness to occasion.
3. Suitableness for her social status.
4. Suitableness for her age and type.

The picture she makes is complete, for her accessories are correctly chosen. She does not fall into the class of whom Winterburn speaks when he says, "Of a group of fifty women who may be well groomed, only one is correctly hat-ted."

Clothing should not be selected in a hit and miss fashion. There would be fewer regrets if more time were spent in purchasing as well as planning. Hurried decisions are apt to be disastrous. Too many times things the wearer already has are forgotten in the joy of purchasing something new.

The woman who select a dress without first considering the things she has, has forgotten one of the first rules of correct dress. All garments worn at one time should appear to belong together. She may buy a dress in tan and brown which is lovely in itself, but when combined with last year's gray coat and hat, and black shoes, the dress is forgotten while the eye travels over this chaotic effect. How much nicer the effect had the buyer kept in mind the things she had and purchased a soft blue dress, if this color is becoming, which would have blended nicely with the last year's clothes.

The buyer is too often tempted by the attractiveness of the article itself so that she forgets many essential things that the careful buyer



should note. Snap judgment in buying and bargain counter purchasing is discouraged. Baldwin says, "There are two parties to every bargain, the merchant and the shopper. Be sure it is a bargain for you and not for him." Unwise selection is largely the result of lack of foresight and planning.

The wise buyer studies the clothes she has and decides what new things need to be added. She pays special note to the color and the type of garment that she needs. She approaches the merchant, with some definite thing in mind, and buys only those things which she needs.

Where to Buy

After the decision has been reached to buy something, the next problem is "where to buy it?" The purchaser is always interested primarily in securing the best value possible for her money. Too many times she is unable to recognize true value.

What, then, really determines value for the consumer? To many people the term value means price. To others it is the power the article has to satisfy certain desires. The price of the article may remain the same, but it will have a different value for different people. The price the purchaser is willing to pay, then, for an article is determined by its value to her. This is judged usually by two factors, satisfaction and quality, i. e., quality in both workmanship and material. A woman who is perfectly satisfied with a garment may be willing to pay more for it just because of the satisfaction she feels, than she would for one that does not exactly meet her needs.

The woman who is buying ready-made garments and can afford it, may feel greater value in a dress that comes from some recognized house, because of the satisfaction she gets when she wears the dress. The dress, however, may not have qualities that are superior to a dress that does not carry a "label."

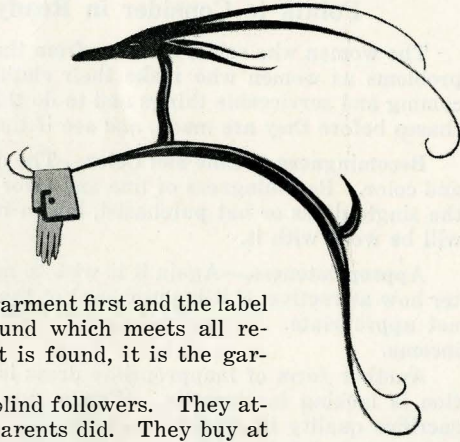
Beauty does not lie beneath a "label", nor does it run parallel with cost. Becomingness and suitability do not necessarily cost a great deal of money but they do cost time and trouble. Many times they require going from shop to shop in order to find just the right thing, but all this is worth the time expended if the results are satisfactory.

The problem of where to buy, then, resolves itself into two factors. Is it value in the garment itself, that will give greatest satisfaction, or the fact that the dress comes from some exclusive shop?

"Exclusive shops specialize in selling labels." In a few cases their lines in hats or dresses cannot be matched in other places but as a rule they buy from the same manufacturers that other stores do. Again, they have their own manufacturing plants, but sell their surplus stock to other mer-



chants. Thus, in either, case the "exclusiveness" is restricted to the label which is pasted into the finished product. The well dressed woman does not necessarily have labels in all her clothes. A good grade of garments is found in these shops and the price is higher partly because of the quality. The purchaser must take this into account, as she shops, but the wise buyer will look at the garment first and the label last. If a garment can be found which meets all requirements, no matter where it is found, it is the garment to purchase.



Too many times people are blind followers. They attend one church because their parents did. They buy at a certain store because they always have. This is not wise or efficient. Shop around. Buy where the best values can be found.

Price is not an indication of quality, beauty or becomingness. It is determined by the purchaser's desire for the article. It is a known fact that cost and supply are regulated by the demand, that is, an article which is placed on the market when the demand is great commands a higher price than one that is put on the market after the peak has been reached.

Producers manufacture what the purchaser wants. So she has within her power the ability to raise or lower prices. She can lower prices by ceasing to buy goods, and she can raise prices by following fads and styles, and by demanding the color or styles that everyone else is asking for.

A recent study made of the motives in clothing selection shows that becomingness of line determines choice more frequently than any other motive. Next in importance is becomingness of color and replacement of worn clothing. The reasons given for having unused garments on hand all indicated unwise selection.

From the consumer's standpoint then, a dress with becoming lines would have more value to her than one with lovely material, and very unbecoming lines. If one must be sacrificed for the other, the consumer must decide which, but a dress, no matter what other qualities it may possess, if it is not first becoming is not satisfactory.

Ready-made Versus Home-made

Whether garments are to be purchased ready-made or made in the home will depend on the individual and circumstances. No rule can be made. The apparent factors, however, which seem to be deciding elements are:

1. The amount of time available for sewing.
2. Value of that time.
3. Ability to make a satisfactory garment.
4. Appreciation of what is good taste in dress.

Points to Consider in Ready-to-wear Clothing

The women who select clothing from the shops have many of the same problems as women who make their clothing. Each wishes to have becoming and serviceable things and to do this they must analyze their purchases before they are made, and see if they meet the requirements.

Becomingness of Line and Color.—The dress should be becoming in line and color. Becomingness of line and color must be considered not only in the single dress or hat purchased, but in its relation to other things that will be worn with it.

Appropriateness.—Again it is wise to mention that a garment, no matter how attractive, if it is purchased at the expense of other necessities is not appropriate. Clothing expenditures must be in keeping with one's income.

Another form of inappropriate dress is an attempt to imitate. Imitation is lacking in sincerity. Women are often guilty of it, when they sacrifice quality in material and line for the cheap and inferior dresses which are in "style." As soon as the buyer realizes that simplicity is not plainness or poverty, but the foundation of beauty and refinement, much has been gained and there is little danger of inappropriate dressing. It is always better form to be underdressed than overdressed.

Clothing must always be suitable for age and type. It is very unbecoming to an older woman to try to dress like her high school daughter. There is dignity in age which cannot be expressed with clothes designed for the young figure.

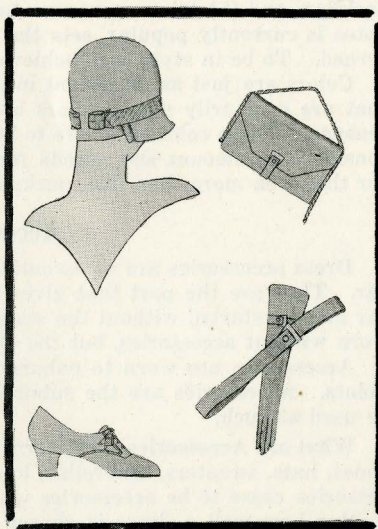
Quality of Material.—It is always wise to select material that is good in quality. It gives greater satisfaction to the wearer and will look better for a much longer period of time. It is real economy to buy good material. The initial cost may be more, but the yearly cost is less. The weave should always be considered, for wearing qualities are very dependent on weave. The use the garment will be put to, will depend a great deal on the type of weave that may be selected. The purchaser must keep in mind her purpose and decide whether the material is practical for her. Some women expect more wear from their garments than others. These women must give special heed to material.

Workmanship.—Upon the workmanship which goes into the making of a dress depends the holding of its shape and the keeping of its general appearance. The higher priced clothes have been hand cut, and usually greater care has been given to shaping different parts. There are more individual touches and hence usually better fitting garments result. Material is many times skimped in cheaper dresses.

In studying the fit of a garment, it is wise to analyze it from several angles. Notice the general effect; does it seem to fit, or does it appear too small or too large? If the general effect is good, then consider the finer points. Is the neckline becoming? Do the shoulder seams come where they should? Is the armseye and sleeve the right size? Is the sleeve long enough? Can alterations be made satisfactorily? The purchaser must not rely on the merchant for answers to these questions. She must answer them herself.



Suitable accessories to be worn with the afternoon dress



Suitable accessories to be worn with the street dress

Notice the seams and the finishes of the dress. Finishes need not be elaborate but they should be such that the wearing qualities of the garments are protected. Sometimes seams are stitched too near the edge or are puckered. Faulty seams do not mean necessarily that a garment should not be purchased if it is satisfactory in other ways. But such defects should be remedied immediately, as they will be more difficult to mend after the garment has been worn.

The machine stitching should be nicely done, with stitches that are at least medium sized. Stitches that are too long break easily. As a rule, machine stitching is to be preferred to poorly done hand stitching.

Cleaning Qualities.—The ease with which a garment can be cleaned is essential from a standpoint of work and expense. If the garment is such that it requires commercial cleaning, the expense of such cleaning must be considered before the dress is purchased.

Style.—Every woman wishes to appear up to date, and in style. But to be in style does not require purchasing new clothes each season. Whisperings of fashion can be heard long before the real season for them opens. Gather information on advance styles and keep these suggestions in mind, while selecting. Do not buy the extreme, but rather the garments that show trends. It is not economy to buy a style that is at the height of its popularity, for immediately that style begins to lose its importance. Wise selection as to style will allow a dress to be worn several seasons, and it will not be marked as a certain season's dress.

With style the dominant factor in dresses, it is well to bear in mind the constituent elements of style notes. These are: (1) length and line of skirt, (2) line of blouse or waist, (3) length and shape of sleeves, (4)

neckline, and (5) trim or ornamentation. Whatever combination of these notes is currently popular, sets the current style so far as design is concerned. To be in style is to achieve its effect.

Colors are just as important in styles as lines. However, some colors that are ordinarily staple colors become the fashionable shades at some seasons. These colors are safe to buy. The average purchaser who must consider the amount she spends for clothing should avoid fads in color, for this even more than line marks a dress.

Accessories

Dress accessories are as essential to the costume as the starter is to a car. They are the part that gives the costume an appeal or a start. A car may be started without the starter functioning. Also a dress may be worn without accessories, but the effect is spoiled.

Accessories are worn to enhance the costume, and bring out its best points. Accessories are the subordinate part of the costume and should be used as such.

What are Accessories—The term accessories may include jewelry, hose, shoes, hats, sweaters, umbrellas, handbags, scarfs, gloves, or flowers. Accessories cease to be accessories when they fail to add to the whole. No matter how well a dress is chosen and designed, unless the accessories are in keeping with it, it will not be complete and harmonious.

Choosing Accessories—Careful choice and selection of accessories is necessary to make a harmonious costume. They must suit the costume in type, as well as harmonize with the colors, and bring out the best colors in the eyes and hair. It is a very common thing to see excessive use of accessories. This is often the result of the failure of some to realize that a showy imitation of jewelry does not suggest wealth. Costume jewelry may be very effective if used correctly, but very ineffective if used in quantity. Complete sets, as necklace, pin, earrings and bracelet of large and inexpensive stones, are not effective and ruin any costume.

Hats and shoes together with a bag or gloves complete most costumes. These accessories should harmonize in color, type, and style. Satin shoes are not in keeping with a tailored wool dress, nor a metal hat with a street costume.

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